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## Newsletter - 1995-10-05

E. De la Garza

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# NEWSLETTER

104-1528

5 October 1995

Washington, DC

## INFORMATION AT YOUR FINGERTIPS -- HOW TO ACCESS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE REPORTS.

Because of the widespread interest in agriculture and agriculture related matters in the 15th District, I want to advise of a new electronic service now accessible through the USDA. For example, are you interested in the forecast for U S agricultural exports? Do you want to take a comprehensive look at the 1994 financial performance of the farm sector? Perhaps your specific interest is in agricultural trade statistics, or the fiscal 1995/1996 forecast for U S sugar production and consumption. If you have questions of this nature, or if you work in any capacity in the agriculture sector then this service will provide you with current and invaluable information.

ERS Situation and Outlook reports are available electronically within several hours of release through the **Call-ERS/NASS** bulletin board and through the worldwide Internet. Both of these services are free. To use the **Call-ERS/NASS** bulletin board:

- (1) call 1-800-821-6229 or 1-202-219-0377 through your modem (up to 9600 baud, 8 data bits, a stop bit, no parity);
- (2) follow the prompts to login;
- (3) select "E" from the main menu.

Situation and Outlook reports are stored as ASCII files and can be downloaded using most popular protocols. For assistance with **Call-ERS/NASS**, call 202-219-0515 or e-mail [service@econ.ag.gov](mailto:service@econ.ag.gov).

To obtain reports through the Internet use one of the following methods:

- 1.) **World Wide Web URL:** [gopher://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu:70/](http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu:70/)
- 2.) **Gopher:** [gopher usda.mannlib.cornell.edu 70](http://gopher.usda.mannlib.cornell.edu)
- 3.) **Telnet:** [telnet usda.mannlib.cornell.edu](http://telnet.usda.mannlib.cornell.edu), login=usda, no password
- 4.) **FTP:** [ftp usda.mannlib.cornell.edu](http://ftp.usda.mannlib.cornell.edu), login=anonymous, password= <your e-mail address>, cd/reports
- 5.) **E-mail:** For instructions on how to subscribe electronically to ERS reports, send a message with no subject and the word "lists" in the body to [usda-reports@mannlib.cornell.edu](mailto:usda-reports@mannlib.cornell.edu).

If you need assistance with Internet delivery, call 607-255-5406 or e-mail [help@usda.mannlib.cornell.edu](mailto:help@usda.mannlib.cornell.edu). Situation and Outlook reports are also available immediately upon release through the USDA Computerized Information Delivery System (CIDS). You can obtain more information about this service by calling 202-720-9045.

# # #

**RENTER'S RIGHTS Q&A.** Regularly I hear from constituents about problems they are having with their landlords or with renting a place to live. I am asked to look into their concerns in an effort for them to better understand their rights under the law.

Since most of us at one point or another in our life rent either an apartment or a house, here are some things you should know about leases, security deposits, and your rights as a renter. It will also provide you with a list of questions to ask when you're looking at properties.

**What information should the lease include?** A lease is usually a written agreement between you and your landlord. The lease tells you how much your rent will be and for what period of time. It also tells you what services your landlord will provide, such as painting and maintenance. If this information isn't provided, ask your landlord to state on the lease how repairs and other maintenance concerns will be handled.

It's very important to read your lease carefully. If you don't, you may miss clauses that tell you when you can play your stereo, which door to use to take furniture in and out, and whether or not you can own a pet.

Keep in mind, though, that your lease isn't etched in stone and you may be able to negotiate changes before you sign. If you want clauses changed, ask the landlord to do so, and be certain to get any changes in writing.

**Why should I pay a security deposit?** A security deposit is usually required to offset the landlord's cost of repairing any property damage caused by you, such as soiled carpet or a hole in the wall. Before you sign the lease and move in, find out what your deposit covers and the conditions for a refund. Also, inspect the property with the landlord and make note of all damages you see by writing them down and/or taking pictures. Ask to have "normal wear and tear" defined in the lease, along with any procedures such as carpet cleaning or fumigating that are charged to tenants when they leave.

If your landlord deducts for any damages when you move out, ask him for an itemized list of the damages he deducted, including the amount and the reason why. Compare his list to the list of damages you wrote down before you moved in. And if you see items you don't agree with, let your landlord know immediately. If you don't, you may lose your rights to contest the damages, and lose some or all of your deposit. Tenant-landlord relations are usually regulated by the local county government. Check your phone book under "Housing" if you need assistance.

**What do I do if I feel that I've been discriminated against?** The Fair Housing Act makes it illegal for anyone to be denied housing on the basis of race, color, sex, religion or national origin. It also protects pregnant women, people with mental and physical handicaps, and parents or people who have legal custody of minor children. However, there are some exceptions to this law. For example, some apartment buildings may be specifically designed for the elderly and may exclude families who have minor children. This is an acceptable practice.

When renting an apartment, you may suspect discrimination for several reasons, such as a building manager who refused to show you an apartment after advertising that apartments are available. If you feel that you're a victim of discrimination, there's help. If you have sound credit, are employed and agree to the terms of the lease, but you're denied housing, call 1-800-669-9777.

Knowing all of this information up front can be very helpful to you in your search for finding just the right place to live. If you would like to get more information on housing, send your name and address to **Consumer Information Center, Dept 560B, Pueblo, Colorado 81009**. You can also access the Consumer Information Center electronically. E-mail the message "SEND INFO" to [cic.info@pueblo.gsa.gov](mailto:cic.info@pueblo.gsa.gov) for directions to the Bulletin Board System.